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Cont

## Background of the Invention

Please replace the second and third complete paragraphs on page 3 with the

following:

### Summary of the Invention

It is therefore an object of the invention to create an improved composite material that particularly from the standpoint of use as a backing sheet material in disposable hygiene articles precludes the known disadvantages.

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This object is attained by a composite material formed in three layers. The first layer comprises substantially continuous staple fibers with a diameter of 15 to 35  $\mu\text{m}$ , a second film layer, and a third layer of microfibers with a diameter of less than 10  $\mu\text{m}$ . The third layer is provided on the full surface of the side of the first layer remote from the second film layer. The third layer three-dimensionally penetrates the surface structure of the first layer in such a way that the mean spacing  $D'$  between the third layer and the second film layer is less than the thickness  $D_{\text{sp}}$  of the first layer, sandwiched in between.

Please replace complete paragraphs 1-7 on page 9 with the following:

The object is furthermore to disclose a method for producing a composite material of the invention. This further object is attained by a method comprising the steps of:

forming a staple fiber layer with an open surface structure;

applying microfibers to the staple fiber layer;

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solidifying the microfiber/staple fiber layer formed by the action of pressure and a temperature that is above the softening point of the microfibers and/or of the staple fibers;

applying a predetermined film on the staple fiber side to the thus prefabricated microfiber/staple fiber composite; and

solidifying the microfiber/staple fiber composite with the foil by the action of pressure and a temperature that is above the softening point of at least the film.

#### Brief Description of the Drawings

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cont.  
Further characteristics, details and advantages of the invention will become apparent from the accompanying claims and the drawing and the ensuing description of a preferred embodiment of the composite material of the invention and of a method for its production.

Fig. 1, is a sectional view perpendicular to the plane of a composite material of the invention;

Fig. 2, is a section as in Fig. 1, on a larger scale;

Fig. 3, is an apparatus for producing a composite of a staple fiber layer and a microfiber layer;

Fig. 4, is an apparatus for applying a film layer to the composite made in accordance with Fig. 3; and

Fig. 5, is a second embodiment of an apparatus for applying a film layer to the composite made in accordance with Fig. 3.

Description of the Preferred Embodiment-

#### IN THE CLAIMS

✓  
Please cancel claims 1-21 without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter thereof.